

January 31, 2025

**Submitted Electronically**

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 W. Temple St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan Project**

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Conservancy, I am writing to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan Project. The La Brea Tar Pits and the George C. Page Museum (Page Museum) are significant and identified historic resources operated by the Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County (NHMLAC), located on portions of the 23-acre Hancock Park. The Conservancy submitted comments on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) with our concerns about impacts to these two cultural resources. We thank NHMLAC staff and their consultant team for their ongoing collaboration and meetings with the Conservancy on this project and undertaking.

The project site includes 13 acres of the eastern and northwestern portions of Hancock Park and broadly encompasses what is known as La Brea Tar Pits, which includes the George C. Page Museum (Page Museum). Hancock Park and the La Brea Tar Pits were first deemed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. More recently, in 2014, the La Brea Tar Pits, Hancock Park, and the Page Museum were all identified as eligible for designation at the local, state, and national levels through the City of Los Angeles's SurveyLA historic resources survey.

While a number of historic resources are identified and analyzed as part of this DEIR, the two primary resources consist of the 1) La Brea Tar Pits Historic District and 2) George C. Page Museum. The La Brea Tar Pits Historic District is eligible for landmark designation at the state, county, and city levels, and previous analysis also determined its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The historic district consists of related cultural/paleontological resources, site/landscape features, and institutional facilities reflecting the



story of over 100 years of scientific excavation, study, public education, and exhibition of one of the world's most significant concentrations of Pleistocene-age fossils.

The 1977 Page Museum was identified as eligible for landmark designation at the state, county, and city levels, in addition to the National Register of Historic Places. The building was documented as an “excellent example of Late Modern institutional architecture, designed by local architecture firm Thornton and Fagan.” The Conservancy also identified the Page Museum as part of our recent “When the ‘70s Turn 50” initiative, celebrating important architectural and cultural historic places throughout Los Angeles County from this era.

Through our continued dialogue with NHMLAC Staff and the project team, many of the impacts initially identified within the DEIR for the Page Museum have now been fully addressed or reduced in *Revised Alternative 3*. The FEIR finds that in regards to the Page Museum:

*Alternative 3 would reduce impacts to the Page Museum to the extent that the building would continue to convey its historic significance and retain its eligibility as a historical resource.*

We are grateful these changes have been made and that historic eligibility will be retained, as Revised Alternative 3 provides a path forward that is sensitive to the historic Page Museum. We believe this contextual approach will not lessen the experience for future museum patrons as compared to the other project alternatives. In fact, the alternative will provide guests with more seamless transitions between the interpretive interior spaces and the exterior tar pits and other paleontological features.

The Conservancy does make note that the full project build, even under Revised Alternative 3 does still lead to significant and unavoidable impacts on the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District and changes to the existing site conditions, as explained in the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations:

*However, the Recommended Project would result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District. Implementation of the Recommended Project would result in a comprehensive redesign of Hancock Park, which would erode and interrupt the eclectic but cohesive character-defining features of this historic district such that it would no longer convey the reasons for its significance as a California Register of Historical Resources and locally eligible historic district.*

The Conservancy affirms that though the impacts have been lessened, the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District will no longer convey its full significance. We understand a Statement of

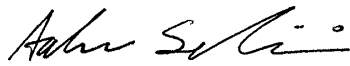


Overriding Considerations will be made, but ask for museum staff for continued dialogue throughout the design process to identify further opportunities to reduce impacts.

**About the Los Angeles Conservancy:**

The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 5,000 member households throughout the Los Angeles area. Established in 1978, the Conservancy works to preserve and revitalize the significant architectural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles County through advocacy and education.

Sincerely,



Andrew Salimian  
Director of Advocacy

CC: Leslie Negritto, Chief Operating Officer, Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County

